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ever the various nations should attempt to understand the art of other nations for it is in art that the soul of the foreign nation speaks to them. Mutual respect rests on mutual understanding. It is in high art and the understanding of high art that the national boundary lines cease to be significant.

And will the German scholar and thinker give up Shakespeare? We who have devoted our lives to philology are slow in reading, in reasoning, and determining. If we genuinely love our science we have formed or accepted certain standards by which we judge and to which we hold. These standards are the standards of truth and of truth only. And truth, we maintain, is beyond biased nationality.

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## **The Attitude of the American Teacher of German Toward Germany.\***

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A year ago individuals and magazines were vying with one another in discussing with more or less vituperation who brot on the war. It is significant that this season of scalding words is noticeably passing and in its stead has come a period of speculation as to the status of the world in respect to politics, industry, commerce, religion, and morals when the great scorching wind of passion has passed. That is to say, big as is the question of attempting to locate the blame for the war, the civilized world is beginning to realize what a Herculean task it will be to make the necessary adjustments between nation and nation when the shouting and the tumult have ceased. It is indeed true as a newspaper writer has lately and sagely remarked that hot words are least in place when passions are at the melting point.

If ever there was a time for calmness and quiet words it is now. This fact the neutral nations in particular are beginning to perceive and already they are attempting to prepare themselves for reconstruction to a new world-order. This is not the same as saying that men are no longer stirred by what is wrong or by what is heroic. We can not but be wrought up emotionally by such a stupendous conflict of principles which are of vital concern to us, but it is folly to encourage in ourselves or others any ingrowing spirit of unchecked rancor. We can not be reasonable with our emotional feathers always on end. This is particularly true for American

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teachers of German in this present crisis. Some of them have become rabid partisans and have thus destroyed their usefulness. It behooves them to save themselves from both the frying-pan of Germanophobia and the fire of Anglophobia, else they can have no message to our cosmopolitan American civilization. Our German instruction is the place where our American culture dove-tails in with that of Germany and each teacher of German is a point of contact with a source of energy which may in-flow into our American life. We have a compelling duty not only for our own sakes but for the sake of world-citizenship to keep ourselves as unspotted as we may from the contagion of hatred.

As Americans we could ill afford to wipe off the slate in toto our Anglo-Saxon traditions: as little do we wish to do without the contributions which Germany has made and still can make to us. With all her adaptation of these gifts from abroad to her own life America is not ultimately to try to become a second England nor to attempt the impossible feat of turning herself into a cultural appendage of Germany. When Germany was groping for a truly national literature and while she was still imitating the brilliant intellectual life of seventeenth-century France, the immortal Lessing called the attention of his countrymen to the literature of England and particularly to the works of Shakespeare as models better suited to the German temperament. In the same breath, however, he uttered the sage warning, "Shakespeare will studiert, nicht geplündert sein." As Americans we have our own problems to meet and our own destiny to work out and we should be grateful for real help from any source; but we ought at the same time to remember that these sources, Germany, England, and the rest, are to be studied, not to be transplanted bodily to our side of the Atlantic.

If we are agreed that Germany has a real contribution to make to America, it is evident that our teachers of German in high school and college are the most effectual instruments by which that contribution can and does become operative. Hardly another nation of the earth could have warded off the blows of its enemies as effectually as Germany has done, and all the world ascribes this success to its wonderful discipline. This lesson is being brought home in unmistakable fashion to the more easy-going nations, ourselves included. Americans are slow to sense the necessity for discipline. We are like the cricket in the fable; we want to sing all summer and yet we expect to be taken care of when winter sets in. Alert and persistent as we are in the conduct of our private affairs, in the conduct of public business we are inefficient and we spend our human and our natural resources in riotous living. It is in respect to efficient government that we must sit at the feet of Germany for some time to come learning what she has to teach us. The need of learning this lesson from Germany is as vital today as it was five years ago. That is to say, we can not

cut ourselves off from this source of help without great damage to ourselves. Perhaps some of you are asking in your hearts what this has to do with the teaching of German in the high school. Let me remind you that since the superstructure of our American knowledge of Germany and her institutions rests upon the work of the efficient high school teacher as a basis, it becomes an important question for every teacher of German whether he or she are going to cut their sticks and run, at this juncture, or whether they are going to continue their vital service to the state.

Another indispensable contribution of Germany to America is Germany's insistence upon the supreme value of man as the gateway through which flows the creative force that is fashioning history. Americans as a whole are prone to estimate a man by his cleverness or by his qualities as a good mixer or by certain conventional types of goodness; the Germans inventory him more according to his capacity to generate dynamic ideas, or lofty ideals, or to produce those goods that satisfy man's love of the beautiful. The German finds a greater amount of satisfaction in his ideals and in the products of the creative human imagination, an idea well expressed in the following lines:

"I know that I must serve the will  
Of beauty and love and wisdom still;  
Though all my hopes be overthrown,  
Though universes turn to stone,  
I have my being in this alone  
And die in that desire."

(Laurence Binyon.)

I do not mean by this that America is without any idealism. Often-times a comparison between Germany and America in regard to their idealisms does great wrong to America. On the other hand, I must admit that to the German the invisible world seems more vital and more continuously present, and that the higher reaches of human thought and imagination receive more respectful and appreciative attention in Germany than in America. Such kings of the mind and soul as Kant and Goethe and Schiller have taught their countrymen to lay a supreme value upon personality and those things which enlarge it. In an American community of which I know every man is rated by his ability or inability to "lick" every other able-bodied male of the countryside. Until we Americans of the middle class come to lay less stress on the quantity of a man's muscle and more on the quality of his mind and personality we need the lesson that Germany of all the modern nations can best teach us in this connection. And all these finer fruits of idealism can be gathered only if we keep a vital touch with Germany and only if the ground has been well cultivated by the high school teachers of German. Again, I ask, are these

teachers going to desert and leave this weak place in America's defences unprotected or are they going to stay and fight right doughtily?

I am well aware that these two contributions of Germany just mentioned have nothing new about them for they have been discussed time and time again, but I am equally conscious that they need re-iterating. I feel with the minister who, when remonstrated with for preaching in his new charge the same sermon for the fifth Sunday in succession, remarked that he would pass to another subject as soon as his parishioners had put all the teaching in his first sermon into practice. The two factors—discipline and reverence for personality—need to be held up to America until we begin to sense our need of them.

It is not only, however, for what Germany can give us that it merits our reverence and even our affection but for what it is. It is not possible that the German people could have changed in the twinkling of an eye from a nation of civilized human beings to one of devils and pirates and butchers. I am of the belief that when the war is over and the expression of public opinion is less censored and held in leash than now that we shall learn how, on the one hand, we have had a one sided view of Germany's cause and conduct of the war, and on the other, how many Germans themselves deplore extreme measures which their Government asserts that it has been forced to adopt. This is a consideration which ought to be seriously reckoned with when we find ourselves feeling embittered by some new report of savagery.

There is a still larger and more compelling reason for teachers of German to keep cool heads. Whatever the fortunes of war, it is impossible that a nation so charged with mental and spiritual vigor can be permanently quashed. In other words, when the horrible drama is over there will still be Germans upon the earth, and as Americans we shall have to live with them in the neighborhood of nations. What are we going to do about it? Are we going to behave ourselves as good neighbors to Germany or will we shut ourselves up in our shells and live all alone like Robinson Crusoe on his island? This latter alternative is impossible, for America has been forced out of her isolation. Therefore, the very practical problem confronts us of living in amicable relations with Germany. And the only basis upon which America and Germany can live together in the same world is that of mutual understanding and respect. I assert that the basis of such an understanding is formed in the German instruction of the high school class-room.

It seems not too much to say, then, that you teachers of German have in your hands the instilling of that state of mind which is the requisite of an enduring peace, that the foundations for the final adjustment between America and Germany rest upon the work that you are doing day by day. Do you see what I am driving at? Sometimes when you are knee-deep in

routine it may seem to you that nothing vital could come of your work. Or again, discouragement perhaps frequently clouds your horizon and you have no vision. You must not think lightly of your work but the rather catch a view of the great army of human progress of which you are no insignificant part. It is said that the Prussian victories of 1870 and 1871 were won in Prussian school rooms. As I see it, it is no less possible for the great era of peace and amity that will follow upon the heels of the present international holocaust to be—as far as Germany and America are concerned—largely the work of the high school teachers of German. The work which you can do is more fundamental than the schemes of pacifists or the clamor of the advocates of preparedness. It is you high school teachers who give our ambassadors and our consuls, our newspaper men and our historians, our shippers and our college professors of German their first impressions of Germany. Most of all, however, you induct into the study of this language the son of the common man. And in so far as you succeed in inoculating a spirit of good-will, respect, and affection for Germany into the future corner-grocer, or the undertaker, or the harness-maker, or the banker and get them to concern themselves with interests that go beyond the limits of their own town so that they will take for granted the vital relation of nation to nation as they now take for granted the unity of the several states in the United States, you will have gone a long way toward initiating that time of more lasting peace which must some day come to pass. Your duty to America is thus the solution of the problem of preparedness not for war but for peace.

Possibly some of you have been wounded to the quick by reported actions of Germany and the mortification of bitterness has already set in. Do not allow yourselves to be made useless by the creeping paralysis of rancor and hatred. Besides, there is much more than your own feelings at stake. If the welfare of the individual often counts for little in comparison with that of the state, how much truer it is in the wider sphere of international affairs. How puny our personal grievances appear in comparison with the great issues now in the balance! It is a time to put away a narrow personal or provincial outlook and learn to think and feel internationally. You teachers of German are called upon to become, as it were, international shock absorbers. Indifferent to the principles involved in the present conflict one can scarcely expect you to be, but you have the privilege and duty of taking up this shock within yourselves and seeing to it that it is not passed on to another generation and given more impetus in the passing. And so there is now more than ever the need of teaching German and Germany, first for the need in which America stands of the lesson of discipline and the reverence for personality, and second because of the need which the world has for a more thoroughgoing preparedness for peace.